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ABSTRACT

This study sought to: (1) examine the impact of national certification, state registration, counselor education accreditation, and state certification on the hiring practices of local school systems; (2) assess the knowledge that school personnel officers have of various counseling credentials; (3) assess the knowledge and attitudes of prospective school counselors regarding available credentials; (4) assess the knowledge and attitudes of practicing school counselors regarding available credentials; and (5) assess the degree to which provisional certification was sought by school systems for newly hired counselors. Questionnaires were filled out by 79 school system personnel directors (or the person to whom they forwarded the questionnaire); 334 school counselors; and 111 graduate students in counselor education programs. Results indicated that national counselor credentials have had little influence on employment decisions for counselors. Overall the state certification for school counselors in North Carolina was viewed as significantly more important than any other credential in making employment decisions. All groups perceived their knowledge of national credentials and the state registry for counselors at low to moderate levels. In contrast, their knowledge of state certification for school counselors was highly rated. A majority of the school counselors indicated that they had graduated from a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) approved program, although this finding is unlikely, since only three programs in North Carolina are CACREP accredited for school counseling. This investigation suggests that the counseling profession should take steps to clarify and verify the importance of these credentialing processes. (ABL)

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Counselor Credentialing and School Counselor Employability in North Carolina

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Abstract

A survey of school personnel directors, counselors, and graduate students found all three groups rated their knowledge of the state's school counselor certification higher than their knowledge of any other national or state credential. All groups rated state certification as the most important credential in employing school counselors. Implications and recommendations are suggested.

Counselor Credentialing and School Counselor Employability in North Carolina

In recent years, several credentials for professional counseling and accreditation standards for counselor education have been established at both the state and national levels. The counseling profession has advocated for national and state credentials as a means of establishing a professional identity, legalizing the practice of counseling, and protecting the public from unqualified practitioners (Gerstein & Brooks, 1990). With these criteria have come a stronger identity and clearer role for professional counselors in a variety of work settings. In particular, these credentials and standards include the National Certified Counselor (NCC), accreditation guidelines for graduate training programs by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and licensure or registry laws passed to regulate counseling practice in more than 35 states across the country.

The effect of these national and state credentialing processes on the education, certification, and employment of school counselors so far has been minimal. In a survey of state department school counseling consultants in all fifty states and the District of Columbia, Paisley and Hubbard (1989) found that only a few states used NBCC and CACREP guidelines in the preparation and employment of counselors. The overwhelming majority of state officials in their study indicated that national credentials "made little or no difference in employment decisions" (p. 67). The purpose of the present study was to assess the importance of various counseling credentials relative to the employability of school counselors in North Carolina. In contrast to Paisley and Hubbard's nationwide surveyed, this study examined the perceptions of local personnel directors, practicing school counselors, and graduate students in counseling.

Literature Review

National and State Credentials

The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), initiated by the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD), was incorporated in 1982 as a not-for-profit organization separate from AACD (Stone, 1985). By 1987, the number of counselors certified as NCC's surpassed 17,000 with applicants anticipated to number approximately 1,000 a year until 1992 (Loesch & Vacc, 1988). Thus far, this prediction has not been fully realized. The total number of NCC's nationally at the end of 1991 was

16,020, a slight decline from 1987 (J. Doble, personal communication, January 8, 1992). Since the inception of NBCC, several specialty areas have been added as national certifications, most recently to include a specialty in school counseling.

Shortly after the NCC certification was established, reports were published that favorably assessed its impact on employment opportunities, the availability of third-party payment, and increased credibility of professional counselors (Stone, 1985). Adding to this credibility, research on NBCC's National Counselor Examination (NCE), which was designed to assess knowledge of information and skills (Loesch & Vacc, 1987), concluded "that the NCE is a defensible test that serves the purpose of verifying that candidates for NCC status have acquired a basic core of knowledge important for professional counselors" (Loesch & Vacc, 1988, p. 20). At the same time, a study of the job relevance of the NCE found that "a majority of practicing counselors, regardless of their area of practice specialty ... judged the topics assessed by the entire examination and each of its eight core areas to be 'crucial' or 'important' to their daily work" (Jaeger & Frye, 1988, p. 26).

A second national credentialing procedure, also established through the efforts of AACD and its division, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), is the accreditation process of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). While the standards and procedures established by CACREP are not a credential for individuals, as is NCC, this accreditation process is frequently promoted by counseling associations and advertised by employers and counselors as a credential. For example, institutions that announce vacancies for counseling positions often include the phrase "graduates of CACREP-approved programs preferred" in their advertisements.

Founded in 1981 as a separately incorporated accreditation agency, CACREP developed standards and guidelines for counselor training by using the knowledge base established by ACES in 1973 (Brooks & Gerstein, 1990). This knowledge base includes eight core areas of study: (1) human growth and development, (2) social and cultural foundations, (3) the helping relationship, (4) group counseling and group dynamics, (5) lifestyle and career development, (6) appraisal, (7) research and evaluation, and (8) professional orientation. In a survey of more than 200 ACES members at five regional conventions, Altekruse (1990) found that 85% of the respondents viewed CACREP to be

an essential accrediting body. In this same sample, 61% rated the National Council for Teacher Education (NCATE) as an essential accrediting body and 73% viewed state approval procedures as vital to counselor education. While we might expect that ACES members would strongly support CACREP, their endorsement of NCATE and state approval processes is somewhat surprising in light of the finding that "respondents expressed a desire to ... reduce the number of certification and accreditation bodies" (Altekruse, 1990, p. 101).

Since its inception, CACREP has gradually increased the number of counselor education programs it has accredited. At the same time, because most school counselor training programs are in schools or departments of education at universities and colleges, NCATE continues to be an accrediting body indirectly associated with counselor education. Having more than one accrediting body associated with counselor education, specifically school counselor education, is sometimes confusing to aspirants who contemplate entering the profession. Hosie (1989) noted that since "AACD is no longer affiliated" with NCATE, CACREP is the primary accrediting organization for most counselor education programs (p. 3). Nevertheless, both accrediting bodies continue their involvement with school counselor training programs.

In 1991, AACD listed 72 counselor education programs as accredited by CACREP at the master's and/or doctoral levels and in specialty areas that include: Community Counseling, Marriage and Family Counseling, Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education, and Counselor Education and Supervision. Of this total, 55 programs were accredited in the school counseling specialty area (Accreditation and Credentialing Information, 1991).

In addition to the two national credentialing and accrediting processes described above, initiatives in several states, beginning in the early 1970's, have resulted in licensure and related laws aimed at regulating the practice of professional counseling. By the end of 1991, thirty-five states had passed some form of licensure or registry law to regulate counseling practice (Backover, 1992). A search of studies published during the past fifteen years found that survey results of professional counselors in a variety of work settings, and of counselor educators, legislators, and other groups, indicated that these groups perceived licensure laws to be important to the profession and to the ethical and competent practice of counseling (Davis, Witmer, & Navin, 1990; Hardy, Luck, &

Chandler, 1982; Hendrikson, 1983; Snow, 1981; Swanson, 1981).

Counselor Credentials in North Carolina

In 1983, North Carolina passed a bill providing for the registration of practicing counselors, "the seventh state to credential professional counselors" (Locke, 1984, p. 45). Similarly, one of the first counselor education programs to be fully accredited by CACREP is at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Four of the thirteen counselor education programs in the state have some level of CACREP accreditation in one or more specialty areas. Of these, three programs are CACREP approved in school counseling. The remaining programs with training in school counseling are accredited through their affiliation with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and are approved by the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction.

In 1987, the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction revised the competencies and guidelines for approving school counselor training programs using the CACREP standards as a framework for this revision. School counselor certification in North Carolina requires a master's degree in counseling from an approved program of study, which includes a counseling internship in a school setting.

As of December 1991, the total number of NCC's in North Carolina was 871 (J. Doble, personal communication, January 8, 1992). While a portion of these counselors are school counselors, the NCC credential is not required for school counselor certification in North Carolina. Because school systems in North Carolina have increased the number of counselors hired in recent years, it is appropriate to examine the impact of credentialing on the employability of school counselors in this state. Furthermore, North Carolina has been among the leaders in promoting certification and accreditation credentials for professional counselors.

Method

The objectives of this pilot study were to: 1) examine the impact of national certification, state registration, counselor education accreditation, and state certification on the hiring practices of local school systems; 2) assess the knowledge that school personnel officers have of various counseling credentials; 3) assess the knowledge and attitudes of prospective school counselors regarding available credentials; 4) assess the knowledge and attitudes of practicing school counselors regarding available credentials;

and 5) assess the degree to which provisional (temporary) certification was sought by school systems for newly hired counselors.

Survey Instruments

Three survey questionnaires were designed for use in this study. The questionnaires were designed to survey the perceptions of personnel directors of the state's local school systems (LEAs), practicing school counselors who were hired in the past three years, and graduate students completing master's degrees and planning to enter school counseling. These untested questionnaires were developed through a process of reviews by selected counselor educators, graduate students in counselor education, and an educational researcher. Essentially, each questionnaire asked similar questions to examine first the self-assessed knowledge of these four counseling credentials: North Carolina School Counselor Certification, North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (NCRCP), Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and National Certified Counselor (NCC). A second set of questions was posed to assess the perceived importance of these credentials in the employment of school counselors. The three questionnaires are in Appendix A of this report.

Each questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-type scale in asking respondents how knowledgeable they were of each credential and how important each credential was in hiring school counselors. In addition, personnel officers were asked how many school counseling vacancies their school systems filled in the past three years and how many counselors were hired with provisional certification during that period. North Carolina grants provisional certification of new counselors upon request of a local school system when a candidate is enrolled in an approved program of study and has completed at least 18 semester hours of graduate work toward a master's in counseling.

Practicing school counselors were asked how many years they had been a counselor, what credentials they held, and whether or not they had begun their careers as provisionally certified counselors. The graduate students were asked whether or not they were planning to enter the field of school counseling, and if their counselor education programs were CACREP approved.

Procedures

School system survey questionnaires were mailed to all 133 personnel directors in the state. In this mailing, school counselor survey forms were included with instructions that

they be distributed to all counselors hired in the past three years. Graduate student questionnaires were mailed to all thirteen counselor education programs in the state. Instructions asked that all students who were near the end of their programs of study in school counseling complete questionnaires.

The surveys were mailed in August of 1991 with follow-up post cards sent and telephone calls made during the fall semester of that year. All usable questionnaires were received by the end of January 1992.

Participants

Of the 133 LEA personnel directors who were mailed survey questionnaires, a total of 79 returned usable forms. This return rate of 59% included some forms completed by LEA directors and coordinators of counseling services who were forwarded the questionnaires by their personnel directors. Regardless of who completed the form, in this study they are categorized as "personnel directors." The 79 systems in this sample represented rural, urban, and county school districts across the state.

A total of 334 school counselors from the 79 school systems completed survey questionnaires. The number of counselors who responded from individual school systems ranged from 0 to 17 counselors. The average number of years of experience as a school counselor was four and one-half years (Mean=4.56), and the range was 0 to 26 years of experience. Approximately 9% of the counselors in this study said they were National Certified Counselors (NCC), and about 6% indicated they were North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselors (NCRPC).

Twelve of the thirteen counselor education programs in the state responded to the survey with a total of 133 graduate students completing questionnaires. Of this group, 111 students indicated they were planning to enter school counseling. The remaining 22 students were excluded from the data analyses. Of those students who were in school counseling programs, 32% said they were in a CACREP approved program.

Results

For the purpose of displaying a frequency distribution, data on the five-point Likert-type scale were grouped in three categories: 1-2 = low; 3 = undecided; 4-5 = high. For example, respondents who rated their knowledge of particular credentials as a 4 or 5 were classified in the "high knowledge" group. By contrast, respondents who rated their knowledge of credentials as 1 or 2 were classified as "low knowledge." Respondents who

recorded a 3 made up the undecided group. This same procedure was repeated for survey results indicating the importance of credentials in the employment of school counselors. In addition to these descriptive data, Pearson correlations on the full scale ratings (1 - 5) were performed to assess the relationship among ratings of "importance" and "knowledge" by the three groups of participants.

Knowledge of Counseling Credentials

The personnel officers, school counselors, and graduate students in this study rated their knowledge of state certification, the NCRPC, CACREP, and NCC in similar fashion. On the whole, each group rated itself high on knowledge of state certification and generally low on knowledge of the other credentials. Table 1 gives the percentage of responses across categories for each group and on each credential.

Personnel officers rated themselves high on knowledge of state certification (91%), but rated low on the other three credentials. Similarly, school counselors rated their knowledge of state certification as high (84%), but rated themselves low on knowledge of the NCRPC credential (63%, with 22% undecided), CACREP (56%, with 22% undecided), and NCC (46%, with 25% undecided). Graduate students in school counseling rated their knowledge of state certification as moderate to high (65%), and rated themselves low on their knowledge of the NCRPC credential (60%, with 27% undecided), CACREP (54%, with 25% undecided), and NCC (46%, with 25% undecided).

One questionable finding from this survey is the percentage of counselors who reported that they graduated from a CACREP approved program. Over 60% of the counselors in this study indicated that their training programs were CACREP approved. Given that only three of the thirteen programs in North Carolina are CACREP approved for school counseling, we can only assume that either the LEAs are hiring a number of graduates from CACREP approved programs outside the state, or many of the counselors in this study believed their programs to be accredited by CACREP when in fact they are not. Another explanation is that the counselors in this study did not have sufficient knowledge of various accrediting bodies, such as CACREP and NCATE, when they completed the survey. Most likely, the latter of these three interpretations is true. The majority of counselors in this study believed their training programs were accredited, but they mistakenly assumed the accrediting agency was CACREP.

Likewise, 32% of the students in school counseling programs said their programs were CACREP approved. However, analysis of these responses showed that the graduate students were incorrect 19% of the time when answering this question. In reality, only 15 students (14%) were in one of the three CACREP approved programs. Again, this result is probably a function of misinformation and misunderstanding of accrediting bodies. It should be noted, however, that 81% of the graduate students responded correctly to the question of whether or not their program was CACREP approved.

Importance of Credentials for Employment

Responses of all three groups indicated that state certification was perceived as the most important credential in seeking employment. A total of 95% of the personnel officers responded that state certification was highly important. Likewise, 84% of the school counselors indicated state certification was an important credential, and 88% of the graduate students responded in a similar manner (see Table 1). Personnel directors did not rate any of the other three credentials high in terms of their importance for employment. The counselors rated CACREP second most important, but with only 17% of them giving it a rating of 4 or 5. Graduate students generally rated NCRPC, CACREP, and NCC as more important than did either the personnel directors or school counselors.

Provisional Certification

The 79 participating LEAs reported that an average of approximately five school counseling vacancies had been filled during the previous three-year period (Mean=4.95). The range of counselor vacancies across these school systems during this period was 0 to 18. The average number of provisionally certified counselors hired to fill these vacancies was slightly more than one per school system (Mean=1.31). By comparing the average number of vacancies with the average number of provisionally certified counselors, we can estimate that 26% of the counselors hired in North Carolina during this three-year period were employed as provisionally certified personnel.

By contrast, nearly 60% of these counselors indicated that they were provisionally certified when first hired. The difference between this response and the above estimate that 26% of the counselors in the study were provisionally certified when first employed might be explained in a couple of ways. First, some of the counselors could have been provisionally certified when first hired by another school system, but the systems that now employ them hired them after they had attained full certification. A second possible

explanation is that in North Carolina, all beginning counselors are "initially certified" for a two-year period. Only after they successfully demonstrate professional competencies during their two-year initial certification, do school counselors become fully certified. Given this certification process, it is possible that some of the counselors in this survey misunderstood their initial certification to be the same as provisional certification. In any event, it is noteworthy that in a state with thirteen graduate training programs, more than 60% of the counselors in this study indicated they were hired with provisional certification. At the same time, over 84% of the respondents said they were now fully certified as school counselors.

Discussion

Results of this study should be used cautiously and conclusions drawn prudently. The study is limited by methodological problems found with all survey-type investigations and untested, self-report instruments. Without established reliability for the survey instruments, these results are at best speculative. Furthermore, the return rate of LEA questionnaires, while providing a sample of more than 300 counselors, represents less than 60% of the school systems in the state. Finally, the results of state-wide studies such as this may not have implications for school counseling and credentialing processes in other parts of the country. Nevertheless, this study offers preliminary findings about relationships between counseling credentials and the employability of school counselors in a single state.

Results of this study parallel the conclusions by Paisley and Hubbard (1989) that national counselor credentials have had little influence on employment decisions for counselors. Overall, the state certification for school counselors in North Carolina was viewed significantly more important than any other credential in making employment decisions. In addition, all three groups in this study—personnel directors, school counselors, and graduate students—perceived their knowledge of national credentials and the state registry for counselors at low to moderate levels. In contrast, their knowledge of state certification for school counselors was highly rated.

Some of the findings in this study convey possible confusion about various credentials, particularly CACREP participation by counselor education programs. A majority of school counselors in this sample indicated that they had graduated from a CACREP approved program. Since only three programs in North Carolina are CACREP

accredited for school counseling, this finding is unlikely. Similarly, several graduate students from non-CACREP accredited programs indicated that their programs were CACREP approved. In part, these findings suggest that counselors and students in training would benefit from additional information and clarification about various accrediting bodies, and they need accurate information about which accrediting agencies have approved their graduate programs.

As a preliminary study, this investigation suggests that the counseling profession, particularly the associations that advocate the expansion of national and state credentials and university programs that train prospective counselors, should take steps to clarify and verify the importance of these credentialing processes. To begin, these steps should clarify at state and national levels the differences among accrediting agencies. In North Carolina, only three training programs are accredited by CACREP. The remaining programs are accredited by NCATE through schools and departments of education at the respective colleges and universities. If there are differences in training programs as a result of these various accreditation processes, the counseling profession needs to verify the various distinctions that exist. In North Carolina, this question is complicated by the fact that all counselor education programs, regardless of their accredited affiliation, must also be approved by the State Department of Public Instruction, and the competencies used for that approval process have been adapted from the CACREP standards (Paisley & Hubbard, 1989).

Another step is to improve information about various state and national credentials. In addition, governing bodies of these credentials should investigate reasons why more school counselors do not participate. Only 9% of the school counselors in this study indicated they were NCC's. If this credential is a viable certificate, the counseling profession may need to work more closely with state departments of education to persuade them of its importance. Initially, when the National Board of Certified Counselors was created many counselors participated because it was the first nationwide credentialing process that offered counselors a professional identity. Now that an identity has been established, other reasons for participating in this process are needed. If it is not important for obtaining and retaining employment, fewer counselors will participate.

Future research is needed to verify that counselors who graduate from accredited programs and hold state and national credentials are better prepared and more effective

practitioners than counselors who do not. Up to this point, the credentials examined in this and other studies have offered a clearer identity for the counseling profession. This is an important achievement, but recognition is only valuable when associated with competent and effective professional performance. School systems in North Carolina and other states will embrace these credentials and use them as criteria for employment when the profession demonstrates that differences exist between counselors who graduate from accredited programs and become certified at state and national levels and those who do not. In this study, certification by the State Department of Public Instruction was considered overwhelmingly the most important credential for school counselors. This importance, however, has more to do with the fact that the state mandates this certification than it does with a known relationship between this particular credential and counselor performance. This conclusion can also be drawn for all the credentials examined in this pilot study.

In sum, this study indicates that national and state counseling credentials, developed and promoted by the counseling profession, have had little effect on the employment decisions for hiring school counselors. The steps suggested above will help the profession and those who employ counselors determine whether or not these credentials should have a stronger influence in hiring practices.

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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaires

School System Questionnaire

LEA_____

Dear Personnel Director:

This questionnaire is designed to collect information about school counselor credentials and how they impact on the employability of counselors in North Carolina. Please complete the questionnaire and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope with the questionnaires from selected school counselors in your system. Thank you for your assistance with this study.

1. How many school counseling vacancies has your school system filled in the past three years?_____

2. Using the scale of 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how much value does your system place on each of the following credentials? Circle your responses.

	LOW				HIGH
North Carolina School Counselor Certification (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction)	1	2	3	4	5
North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (N.C. Board of Registered Practicing Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5
Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP Approved Programs)	1	2	3	4	5
National Certified Counselor (National Board of Certified Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5

3. Using the scale of 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how much knowledge do you have of each of the following credentialing processes?

	LOW				HIGH
North Carolina School Counselor Certification (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction)	1	2	3	4	5
North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (N.C. Board of Registered Practicing Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5
Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP Approved Programs)	1	2	3	4	5
National Certified Counselor (National Board of Certified Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5

4. Of the school counselors you hired in the past three years, how many were *provisionally* certified as counselors by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction?

_____

Thank you for taking the time to assist with this survey!

School Counselor Questionnaire

Dear Counselor:

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions and return this survey to your LEA personnel office. Thank you for your assistance with this study.

1. How many years have you been a school counselor?_____

Circle your responses to the following questions:

2. Did you graduate from a CACREP Approved Program?	YES	NO
3. Were you provisionally certified as a school counselor in North Carolina when first hired?	YES	NO
4. Are you fully certified as a school counselor in North Carolina?	YES	NO
5. Are you a National Certified Counselor (NCC)?	YES	NO
6. Are you a N.C. Registered Practicing Counselor (NCRPC)?	YES	NO

7. Using the scale of 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how much knowledge doe you have of each of the following credentials?

	LOW				HIGH
North Carolina School Counselor Certification (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction)	1	2	3	4	5
North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (N.C. Board of Registered Practicing Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5
Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP Approved Programs)	1	2	3	4	5
National Certified Counselor (National Board of Certified Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5

8. How important were these credentials in helping you obtain your counseling position?

	LOW				HIGH
North Carolina School Counselor Certification (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction)	1	2	3	4	5
North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (N.C. Board of Registered Practicing Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5
Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP Approved Programs)	1	2	3	4	5
National Certified Counselor (National Board of Certified Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5

Graduate Student Questionnaire

Dear Counselor Education Student:

You have been selected to participate in a study of counselor credentialing processes used in North Carolina. Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete the form below. Return the completed form to the Chair/Coordinator of you counselor education program. Thank you for your assistance with this study.

Circle your responses:

1. Is your counselor education program accredited by the Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)?
   YES NO
2. Are you planning to enter the field of school counseling? YES NO

3. Using the scale of 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how much knowledge do you have of each of the following credentials?

	LOW				HIGH
North Carolina School Counselor Certification (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction)	1	2	3	4	5
North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (N.C. Board of Registered Practicing Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5
Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP Approved Programs)	1	2	3	4	5
National Certified Counselor (National Board of Certified Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5

4. How important do you believe each of these credential will be in helping you secure a school counseling position after graduation?

	LOW				HIGH
North Carolina School Counselor Certification (N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction)	1	2	3	4	5
North Carolina Registered Practicing Counselor (N.C. Board of Registered Practicing Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5
Council for Accrediting Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP Approved Programs)	1	2	3	4	5
National Certified Counselor (National Board of Certified Counselors)	1	2	3	4	5

Table 1

Percentage* of Responses Regarding Knowledge and Importance of Counseling Credentials

GROUPS	ST.CERT			NCRPC			CACREP			NCC		
	KNOWLEDGE											
	H	U	L†	H	U	L	H	U	L	H	U	L
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Personnel Directors.	91	6	1	9	17	71	6	19	72	13	20	65
School Counselors	84	13	4	14	22	63	22	22	56	28	25	46
Graduate Students	65	14	21	13	27	60	21	25	54	29	25	46
	IMPORTANCE											
	H	U	L	H	U	L	H	U	L	H	U	L
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Personnel Directors.	95	1	1	8	27	60	10	26	56	9	29	55
School Counselors	84	5	9	2	8	86	17	12	67	4	7	85
Graduate Students	88	7	4	32	35	30	29	30	38	28	27	31

* Due to rounding off and elimination of missing data, total percentages under each credential may not equal 100%.

† H = High Importance, U = Undecided, L = Low Importance